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CONGRESSMEN AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS: 1958 AND 1978

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ASTRACT

In the wake of the 1978 CPS National Election Study the prevailing portrait of House elections has changed dramatically. The new portrait is more in harmony with theories developed to explain the increasingly idiosyncratic character of House elections in the 1960s and 1970s. As yet, however, there has been little direct attention devoted to the study of change at the level of the individual House voter. This paper reports on a preliminary effort in that direction based on comparisons of items from the 1958 and 1978 election studies. Four kinds of possible change are the focus of the research: (1) change in the prevalence of citizen perceptions of the House candidates, (2) change in the valence of candidate evaluations, (3) change in the substance of candidate evaluations, (4) change in the behavioral importance of particular variables. While the data show some indication of increased attentiveness to their districts on the part of contemporary incumbents, the overall impression from the data is one of less longitudinal change than might have been expected. These tentative null findings underscore the fact that the greatly changed contemporary portrait of House elections arises mainly from items newly included in the 1978 survey rather than from significant change in the data elicited by ''comparable'' items over time.

CONGRESSMEN AND THEIR CONSTITUENTS: 1958 v. 1978

Morris P. Fiorina

If a student of Congressional elections had dozed off in the political science stacks of the university library in 1965 and slept until 1981, imagine the surprise that would lie in store for him. In 1965 our portrait of congressional elections was dominated by the 1958 Representation Study carried out by scholars associated with the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center (now Center for Political Studies). The highlights of that study were reported to the discipline at large in two widely reprinted articles by Warren Miller and Donald Stokes (1962, 1963), and the complete picture of House elections was to appear in the same authors' eagerly awaited forthcoming book. Though the book remained forthcoming, the portrait arising from the initial installments was the critics' choice until the early 1970s. That portrait had several principal features.

First, and in common with much of the early literature on voting behavior, the portrait violated the prescriptions of popular democratic theory. Information levels among House voters were low, and citizens' perceptions were general, imprecise, and almost devoid of policy or ideological content. Second, House elections appeared to be largely party-line affairs, and the Michigan researchers emphasized that this did not imply an informed choice between responsible parties, but rather the habitual affirmation of apolitical party attachments (Stokes and Miller, 1962). Third, fluctuations in House election results arose not from the actions of the candidates, but from fluctuations in turnout and party defection arising from events and calculations associated with the

Presidential candidates and/or the incumbent President (Campbell, 1960). And fourth, the survey-based portrait conflicted in important ways with that described by the House candidates, who evidently were misperceiving the situation.[1]

In 1981 a new portrait of House elections is loose upon the land. This portrait too rests on a CPS election study, though not the 1958 study. In 1978 the first major congressional election study in two decades was carried out, and it has quickly provided the basis for a new portrait of House elections markedly different from the old. This new portrait too has several principal features.

First, and in common with much of the later literature on voting behavior, the new portrait suggests that popular democratic theory is not so empirically inaccurate as previously believed. Information levels in House elections, particularly incumbent contested elections, are no longer described as dismal. The policy/ideological content of citizen perceptions also appears higher than previously found, though still not exactly widespread. Second, the importance of party attachments appears lower than in 1958. As other studies have shown, the proportion of independent congressional voters has increased, and the loyalty of voters in each partisan category has declined (Ferejohn, 1977). Third, fluctuations in House results now are attributed principally to the qualities and activities of the individual candidates. In the bold words of one scholar (writing prior to the 1978 study, but strongly supported by its findings):

> The major conclusion of the study reported in this book is that congressional elections are local, not national, events: in deciding how to cast their ballots, voters are primarily influenced not by the President, the national parties, or the state of the economy, but by the local candidates. (Mann, 1978, p. 1).

Fourth, the new portrait has a closer fit with the perceptions of 1958 House incumbents, and presumably with those of their successors as well.

Thus, in the short space of a decade and a half one portrait of House elections has been replaced by a very different one. While such intellectual turnabouts are not unusual in the academic world, it is important to understand, as best we can, the reasons for the change. Intellectual history is not the issue; rather, the issue is one of recalling <u>why</u> many scholars felt it was important to do a congressional elections study in 1978. Stated summarily, those reasons were that the 1958 portrait had become increasingly at odds with temporal <u>changes</u> and <u>trends</u> in House elections. For example, Erikson (1972) and Mayhew (1974) each noted that congressional incumbents, long rather successful electorally, became even more so during the 1960s. Similarly, Burnham (1975) wrote of the increasing "insulation" of House elections, a sharp departure from Stokes' (1967) earlier "nationalization" thesis. To explain such electoral change these authors and others proposed numerous hypotheses, many of which focused on the qualities, activities, and strategies of the individual House candidates, factors which according to the 1958 portrait did not matter. Thus, the natural question arose: how had the 1958 portrait changed? If the influence of party was down, were information levels correspondingly up? Had other variables which affect vote choice changed, or had the manner in which other variables — and party — affect the vote choice changed?

Questions like the preceding provided the motivation for the 1978 study and exerted a major effect on its design. It is at least mildly surprising, then, to note that since the release of the 1978 study such questions have received little direct attention. The 1978 study is a scholarly goldmine which can help us learn a great deal about the parameters of contemporary Congressional elections. But 1978 data alone do not and cannot be used to explain the change in aggregate House elections over the past twenty years. That subject demands longitudinal data.

This paper addresses the subject of change in knowledge, perceptions and voting behavior in congressional elections between 1958 and 1978. The method involves comparing data elicited by ''comparable'' items in the two SRC/CPS election studies, an admittedly difficult and dangerous enterprise. Even when item wording remains constant over time, changes in the social or political context may change the way in which citizens respond to the item.[3] When item wording varies, as is often the case in what follows, the difficulties and dangers are compounded. Moreover, special features of the 1958 study make comparative work still more difficult. None of what follows in this paper is conclusive. Certain comparisons are suggestive, some are not even that. But on the supposition that some information is better than none, I will proceed.

RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS: WHAT HAS CHANGED?

By now, thousands of professors, students and journalists have seen diagrams such as those in figure 1, which Mayhew (1974) first used to illustrate the dramatic increase in the electoral margins of incumbents.

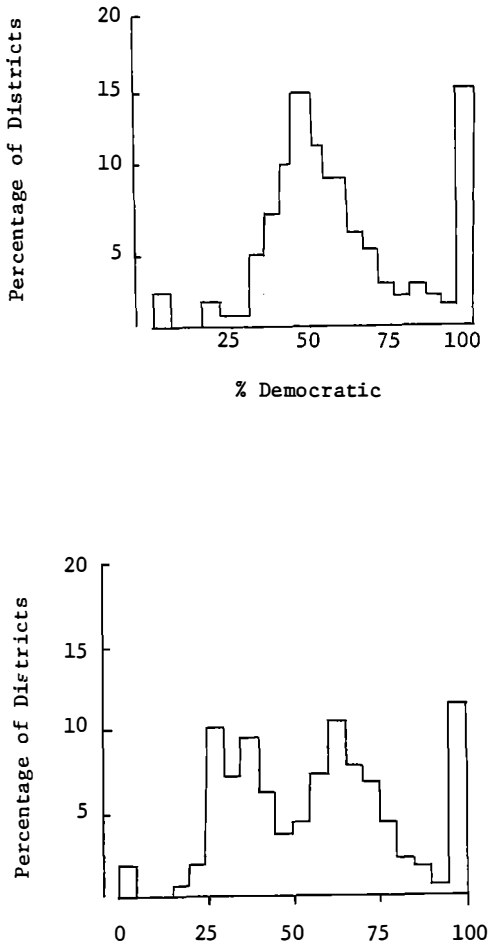
Because American political thought places great importance on electoral competition — insecurity supposedly encourages responsiveness and faithful representation — Mayhew's diagrams caused many of his colleagues to sit up and take notice. If the characteristics of House outcomes were changing, something affecting those outcomes must also be changing. The question was what. Were the voters undergoing some sort of behavioral change? Were the candidates doing something different? Was it some combination of the two? Or was it something larger than both?[4]

[Figure 1 here]

Only one of the proposed explanations for the increased advantage of incumbency fit reasonably well with the 1958 portrait of congressional voting behavior. This was the ''incumbency as voting cue'' theory advanced by Erikson (1972), Burnham (1975), and Ferejohn (1977). These authors accepted the prevailing view of House elections as low-information, party-line affairs, but observed that the extent of party identification had declined somewhat, and that the influence of party identification in structuring both presidential and congressional voting had lessened since the 1950s. If an increased number of voters had no party identification, or hesitated to rely on it as much as previously, then they might be casting about for an alternative rule of thumb for voting. Because incumbency is easily ascertained, it might serve as a readily available cue for voters no longer reliant on party ID.

The problems with such arguments at first hinged more on their inherent plausibility than on conflicting data. Voting for incumbents

FIGURE 1: Distribution of Congressional Vote in Districts with Incumbents Running



seemed like a rather simple-minded way to vote, particularly since explanations for the lessened importance of party identification usually posited an electorate becoming more rather than less sophisticated. Moreover, public opinion data showed that citizens were becoming increasingly cynical and distrustful of people in government. How could one square such suggestions with arguments that increasing numbers of citizens were casting more or less automatic votes for incumbents? Very recently, empirical analyses have tended to further undercut the "incumbency as cue" theory. Born (1979) has pointed out that the incumbency advantage is not uniform; it varies systematically across House cohorts. If the incumbency advantage were merely a byproduct of the decline in party identification, there would be no particular reason to expect anything other than random variation in its extent.

Still, if the decline in party identification is not the explanation for the increased incumbency advantage, it might constitute part of a more complicated explanation. In particular, perhaps some incumbents (the advantage was not uniform) behave in ways calculated to take advantage of weakened party ties — or even in ways calculated to weaken those ties still further. For one thing, a variety of indicators suggest that incumbents have grown more solicitous of their constituents during the post-war period. Mayhew (1974) notes that congressional use of the frank skyrocketed during the mid-1960s. Authorizations for travel (Parker, 1980), staff (Fiorina, 1977), and offices increased greatly between 1958 and the present. And of course, campaign expenditures have clearly increased, though reliable data are available only for the 1970s (Jacobson, 1980). There is little doubt

that the availability and use of tangible resources by House incumbents has increased greatly between 1958 and 1978. There are even suggestions that intangible resources increasingly favor incumbents. Payne (1979) for example, speculates that there has been a shift in the old ''work horse v. show horse'' dichotomy from the former to the latter, and that ''show horse'' personality types do better in the electoral arena.[5]

Resource allocation theories have in common the presumption that the 1958 portrait of congressional elections no longer holds, indeed, that incumbents, by their behavior have worked a change in the old portrait. At a minimum, resource allocation theories appear to imply that contemporary voters know more about the incumbent than those of yesteryear. But do they? Only one relevant data series exists.

Table 1, compiled by Ferejohn (1977), contains name recall data for incumbents and challengers over the 1958 to 1974 period. The reader should bear in mind that the 1978 study has confirmed the argument of various researchers (e.g. Abramowitz, 1975; Mann, 1978) that spontaneous name recall demands much more of the citizen than the simple name recognition actually demanded in the voting booth.[6] Thus, we know that the 1958 SRC study and all others using name recall underestimate the sheer visibility of congressional candidates. Still, there is no obvious reason why the extent of the underestimate should vary over time. Thus, name recall might provide an accurate assessment of changes in candidate visibility, and of differences in visibility between say, incumbents and challengers. If that assumption is granted, then Table 1 poses a problem for resource allocation theories. As shown in the Table, while the incumbency advantage grew, the

visibility of incumbents remained constant, both in absolute terms and relative to the challenger. This was an exceedingly surprising finding. It seemed to imply that all the incumbent's efforts were for naught — that they fell on deaf ears — a conclusion quite in keeping with the 1958 portrait of the electorate.

[Table 1 here]

In 1977 I suggested one solution to the preceding puzzle. Perhaps incumbents had not made themselves more visible to their constituents, but had changed their image among those to whom they were visible. In other words, the sheer amount of information had not changed, but the content of the information had (1977, p. 51). Briefly, I argued that the expanded federal presence had increased the importance of two traditional roles of House members, that of ombudsman for constituents experiencing frustration with bureaucratic decisions, and that of broker between groups desirous of procuring a share of federal largesse and the federal agencies which controlled such largesse. Clearly there has been an increase in the casework loads of House offices, and a similar increase in the number of federal programs for which some local group or government might be eligible. If House members increasingly emphasized such activities when dealing with their constituencies, we might observe a substitution of non-partisan, non-programmatic, non-ideological perceptions for more partisan, programmatic and ideological ones. In a nutshell, less controversial information would replace more controversial information in the memories of those having any information at all. Thus, increased support for incumbents would stem from

TABLE 1: Name Recall of House Candidates among Voters, Contested Races with Incumbents Running, 1958-1974

	Incumbent	Challenger	Difference
1958	58%	38	20
1964	63	40	23
1966	56	38	18
1968	64	47	17
1970	55	31	24
1974	60	44	16

an increase in the positive/negative ratio of constituent information rather than from an increase in the absolute level of information.

Perhaps the most notable thing about the foregoing argument was the complete lack of evidence bearing on it. The 1978 CPS study has taken care of part of that problem. The latter contains a wealth of items designed to elicit information about the existence and nature of perceptions and evaluations of congressional candidates, especially incumbents. There are the traditional candidate likes/dislikes, thermometers, seven point scales, items inquiring about the nature of contacts candidates have made with citizens, focused questions about the incumbent's service activities, questions about the relative importance of various activities, and so on. Analyses to date have shown that indeed, constituent assistance and district service are a major component of incumbents' images, second only to candidate personal qualities, and far ahead of policy, ideology, party, group alliances, or whatever (Parker, 1980). Moreover, analyses have shown that constituent assistance and district service, actual and reputed, exert a significant influence on congressional voting (Fiorina, 1981; Jacobson, 1981b). The question remains, though, whether 1978 information levels, candidate images, and voting behavior differ from those of previous years. Consideration of that question is the subject of the body of this paper.

INFORMATION LEVELS, 1958 v. 1978

In 1958 the SRC carried out an ambitious two-part study. The first consisted of the standard national sample of voting age citizens (n=1450, weighted to 1822). The second part consisted of an elite survey of

candidates whose districts fell in the mass sampling frame. In what follows I will be dealing exclusively with the mass survey.

Table 2 contains some basic comparisons of information levels between 1958 and 1978. It also illustrates several of the problems we will be dealing with throughout the remainder of the paper. The first finding in the Table — and it is a surprising one — is that candidate name recall actually is lower in 1978 than in 1958, marginally so for incumbents, greatly so for challengers. A small part of the explanation for the former lies in the heavy retirement rates of the mid-1970s. In 1978 40 percent of House incumbent candidates had entered the institution since Nixon's resignation; lower aggregate name recall partly reflects the lower visibility of relatively junior incumbents.[7] Less substantive and more unfortunate reasons apparently underlie the low level of challenger recall. Jacobson (1981a) has argued that whether through sheer bad luck or malevolent intervention the 1978 sample contains both poorer challengers than actually ran, and fewer citizens favorable to challengers than actually were. Specifically, the sample voters reported casting only 21 percent of their vote for challengers who actually garnered about 32 percent.[8] In addition Jacobson points out that the challengers in the sample spent only four-fifths as much as all challengers, and that politically experienced challengers in the sample (i.e. those who had held previous elective office) spent only half as much as experienced challengers not in the sample. Thus, the 1978 survey contains reactions from people ''. . . extraordinarily hostile to challengers, fond of incumbents, or both'' (Jacobson, 1981a, p. 16), reactions moreover elicited by a poorer group of challengers than

actually contested all races. This unfortunate situation means that information levels, positive/negative evaluation ratios, and so forth are all biased downward in the case of challengers.

[Table 2 here]

A second indicator of information levels in the 1958 survey consists of responses to the item ''Now we're interested in knowing what sorts of persons people think these candidates are. Have you read or heard anything about Mr. (Name of Republican/Name of Democrat)?'' (This question was asked after those who did not recall the candidate's names were provided with the names). As shown in the Table, 1958 incumbents had a two to one edge over their challengers according to the ''heard or read'' item. The 1978 survey does not include the latter item. The closest item(s) appear to be the contact battery which asks the respondent whether he or she has come into contact with the incumbent and challenger or open seat candidates in any of the following ways: met personally, attended a meeting where the incumbent appeared, talked to a staffer, received mail, read about in newspaper or magazine, heard on radio, and saw on TV. The contact battery appears comparable to the ''heard or read'' item in that it explicitly mentions most of the ways a citizen might hear or read something about the candidates, but the distribution of responses to the contact battery is greatly different from that of the ''heard or read'' item. As Table 2 shows, the two-to-one informational advantage of incumbents also appears in 1978. But the absolute levels for both incumbents and challengers are much higher than in 1958, twice as high for the whole sample.

TABLE 2: Some Basic Facts About Contested Races with Incumbents Running,* 1958 v. 1978

	All		Voters Only	
	'58	'78	'58	'78
Name Recall - Incumbent	43.0%	34.4	56.7	48.5
Challenger	25.8	10.9	33.9	16.5
Read or Heard about Incumbent	37.8	----	49.1	----
Read or Heard about Challenger	18.5	----	25.1	----
Some Contact with Incumbent	----	78.9	----	89.4
Some Contact with Challenger	----	37.3	----	44.0
Know which Candidate is Incumbent	58.5	66.9	70.8	82.3
Vote for Incumbent - Sample	----	----	59.8	78.6
- Actual	----	----	57.8	66.8

*1958 figures do not include at large races in Connecticut and New Mexico (which were in addition to district races)

The question obviously is whether information levels actually have doubled in the past twenty years, the decline in name recall notwithstanding, or whether the contact battery simply elicits a much higher proportion of positive responses than the ''heard or read'' item. At first glance the latter possibility seems the more likely: today's incumbents possess greatly increased resources by which to communicate with their constituents, but their challengers, particularly the weak ones in the 1978 sample, have no obviously greater resource base. On the other hand, doubling the information level for challengers required only a 20 percent absolute increase, whereas doubling the incumbents' level required a 40 percent absolute increase, so perhaps the data <u>are</u> consistent with the increased resource advantage incumbents have over challengers. The question merits additional study.

The third indicator of information levels which appears in Table 2 is the percent correctly identifying the incumbent <u>after receiving the names of the candidates</u>. Nearly identical items appeared in both the 1958 and 1978 surveys,[9] and as Table 2 shows, about 10 percent more respondents could correctly identify the incumbent in 1978 than in 1958. But here too, we must raise a caution flag. In 1958 respondents were asked to identify the incumbent immediately after receiving the names of the candidates. In 1978 however, a battery of likes/dislikes items intervened. It is certainly plausible that in racking one's brain for things one likes and dislikes about a candidate (up to four of each) one would think of something which would create an association between a name and incumbency status. Thus, again, we can not confidently say whether the simple ability to identify the

incumbent has increased over time.

In sum, comparisons of information levels between 1958 and 1978 are inconclusive. Name recall actually suggests a decline in information levels, though there are good reasons to discount this suggestion. Two other indicators suggest an increase, but in these cases differences in survey items and question sequencing make one hesitant to have much confidence in the resulting figures. Perhaps the most reasonable conclusion is that the comparisons show no basis for the proposition that information levels have changed over time. Thus, popular explanations of the enhanced incumbency advantage which point to sheer advertising have little support in the data.

CONSTITUENCY RELATIONS, 1958 AND 1978

The major reason congressional election researchers have despaired over the 1958 study is the use of various filters in the interview schedule which pare away large segments of the sample. For example, the 1958 study includes items which inquire whether the respondent has had a casework experience, and whether the respondent recalls anything special the incumbent has done for the district. These items were asked, however, only of those constituents who could correctly identify the incumbent. Granted, it might seem logical that constituents who could not identify the incumbent would report no recollections of casework or district service, but any experienced analyst of survey data would be wary of such logic.[10] The strategy I have followed is to attempt to construct analogous filters for the 1978 survey, and to compare the responses of the subsamples which pass

through the filter in each case. There are two obvious dangers in such a procedure. The first is that the filters fail to correspond and thus do not produce comparable subsamples. The second is that the eliminated subsamples are simply ignored. If there are systematic differences between them, the mode of analysis I have adopted would overlook them. But given that the omitted portion of the 1958 sample has no relevant data whatsoever, I know of no obviously better way to proceed.

In 1958 88 percent of the sample lived in districts with incumbents running for reelection — exactly the same figure as in the 1978 sample. As reported in Table 2, about 10 percent more respondents could identify the incumbent in 1958 as in 1978. Thus, application of the ''know incumbent'' filter nets a marginally larger proportion of the 1978 sample than of the 1958 sample. Both samples were asked a nearly identical item ''can you remember anything special (the incumbent) has done for this district or for the people in this district?'' In each year two responses were coded, and happily, SRC/CPS used the identical open-ended coding scheme both times. Between the similar filter item and the similar survey item, we have a relatively clean comparison of recollections of district service. Both samples were also asked about casework experiences, but here the items differed. The 1958 sample was asked ''Has he ever helped you or done anything personally for you or your family?'' Up to two responses were coded. I defined casework as the category ''personal favors and services'' and about half the category ''information and publicity'', omitting respondents in the latter category who specified receipt of unsolicited PR materials. In 1978 respondents were asked whether they or a family member

had ever contacted the incumbent, and if so, whether it was to express an opinion, seek help with a problem, or to request information. I defined the latter two categories as casework. Though the 1958 and 1978 items clearly differ, if anything the 1978 items are more "difficult." The respondents in 1978 were asked whether they had taken the initiative and contacted the incumbent (the items were named "citizen-initiated contacts" by the committee which wrote them), whereas the respondents in 1958 were asked only if some contact had ever occurred.

Table 3 contrasts the 1958 and 1978 casework and district service variables. If the 1978 items are granted to be at least as demanding as the 1958 items, it appears that casework experience among constituents has tripled over the two decades. Such an increase has been hypothesized, and certainly it is consistent with the growth in personal staffs and district office operations, and with fragmentary reports of casework loads made by House staffs. From an electoral standpoint, reaching an additional 10 percent of one's constituency in a very personal way, can potentially account for several percentage points of additional support.

[Table 3 here]

The district service variable on the other hand, produces findings quite contrary to prior expectation: recollections of special services were more widespread in 1958 than in 1978. How can this be, when federal programs have proliferated between 1958 and 1978, and when congressmen have developed credit-claiming to a fine art? The answer emerges when we look at the breakdown of responses to the district service item. These appear in

TABLE 3

Casework Experiences and District Service Recollections among Citizens who could Correctly Identify the House Incumbent, 1958 and 1978

	All		Voters Only	
	1958	1978	1958	1978
Personal Help	3.5%	9.9	4.1	10.8
Information	1.1	7.7	1.5	9.8
Total Casework	4.5	14.9	5.6	17.2
District Service?	33.2	29.0	37.2	34.3

Table 4. As shown, the number of responses clearly referring to local problems and projects has risen considerably — by more than 25 percent. Such responses are now far and away the most common, though they were also the modal category in 1958. The only other figure in the Table that deserves notice is the virtual disappearance of volunteered negative responses to the district service item over the twenty year period.

[Table 4 here]

So, the data suggest an increase in the proportion of constituents who associate their Representative with particularistic benefits, either in the very personal sense of casework, or in the somewhat broader sense of localized problems and projects. Though the comparisons are not as clean as one would ideally prefer, they appear considerably less ambiguous than those involving information levels in the preceding section. Some real change appears to have taken place in the area of constituent recollections of particularized benefits.

Before moving on, a final comparison might be of interest. This one concerns the Representative's action in the policy sphere, but the connection with the foregoing discussion occurs through the question of who should ultimately control his policy decisions. In both the 1958 and 1978 surveys all respondents were given a version of the classic delegate-trustee distinction (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan and Ferguson, 1962):

> Sometimes voters want their U.S. Representative to do something the Representative disagrees with. When this happens, do you think the Representative should do what the voters think best, or should the

TABLE 4: Nature of District Service Recalled, 1958 and 1978

	1958		1978	
General Competence	8%	(32)	7%	(30)
Provides Access to Government	4	(17)	7	(29)
Communicates with Constitutents	7	(28)	4	(19)
National Legislation, Policy	22	(92)	22	(96)
Local Problems/Pork	30	(127)	42	(183)
Good Party Member	2	(7)	-	(1)
Group References	14	(59)	15	(64)
Negative Comments	5	(22)	1	(4)
Other/Miscellaneous	8	(35)	2	(9)
Total Comments		(419)		(435)

Representative do what he or she thinks best? (1978 wording)[11]

The distributions of responses to this item are most suggestive. Consider Table 5. In 1958 a plurality of Americans opted for the trustee pole of the classic dichotomy. By 1978, however, a solid majority of Americans were unwilling to grant their Representatives such personal discretion. The shift may well be connected to declining levels of trust and confidence in government officials, a question I will not pursue here. Suffice it to say that in addition to an increased association of House incumbents with particularistic benefits, the data suggest an increased willingness to impose particularistic standards on Representatives' policy decisions. The assiduous polling and other means of information gathering utilized by contemporary Representatives may have a very real basis in the attitudes of their constituents.

[Table 5 here]

TABLE 5: Delegate or Trustee? 1958 and 1978

	All		Voters Only	
	1958	1978	1958	1978
In Case of Conflict Representative Should Follow				
District	38.4%	55.4	42.2	56.4
Conscience	45.3	29.8	43.7	29.5
Depends	10.5	11.0	11.9	12.1
Don't Know	5.7	3.8	2.2	2.0
n =	1774	2290	1014	1057

CANDIDATE IMAGES, 1958 AND 1978

Both the 1958 and 1978 surveys contain open-ended items designed to explore the content of citizen perceptions and evaluations of House candidates. Given that such items permit respondents to describe their attitudes in their own words — and assuming that respondents offer their most central or salient attitudes — open-ended responses are the most suitable form of data for ascertaining the content of candidate images. As one would expect, however, there are various difficulties attendant to the temporal comparisons of the open-ended responses. In increasing order of

seriousness they are the following. First, the coding categories utilized by SRC/CPS in 1958 and 1978 differ. Second, the filter used in the 1958 study does not appear in the 1978 study. Third, the format, wording, and sequencing of the open-ended items differs between the two studies.

Coding differences create no insuperable difficulties. In the 1958 study responses were placed into a 70 category ''Congressional Candidate Code.'' In 1978 the standard party/presidential candidate master code was augmented by a number of categories dealing specifically with congressional matters, yielding a classification with upwards of 500 categories. For the most part (i.e. the most commonly offered responses) it is easy to identify the comparable codes in the two studies. The appendix contains the codes underlying the broad categories presented in the Tables which follow. The reader can examine these and take issue with my judgments or not as the case may be.

Filtering out comparable subsamples from the 1958 and 1978 samples poses a more serious problem. The open-ended items in 1958 were asked only of respondents who stated that they had ''heard or read'' something about the candidate. As mentioned in the discussion of Table 2, the ''heard or read'' item does not appear in the 1978 study. The most comparable item(s) in the latter appears to be the contact battery. Recall, however, that twice as high a proportion of the sample passes through that filter as passes through the ''heard or read'' filter in 1958. If the items actually are comparable, no problem exists — the 1978 sample simply is better acquainted with the candidates. But if the contact battery is ''easier to pass'' than the ''read or heard'' item, we will be examining different

subsamples for the two years.

Question wording creates by far the greatest difficulties for a temporal comparison of candidate images. In 1978 respondents were asked the standard battery of likes/dislikes items. Probes elicited up to four positive and four negative responses. In the 1958 study two types of open-ended items appear. The first reads as follows:

> Now how about Mr. (name of candidate). Forgetting about his party for a moment, do you think of him as being the right sort of person to be a Congressman, or don't you have any opinion on this.

Those offering opinions were then asked the reason for their opinion, with up to two responses coded. Notice two features of the ''right sort'' item. First, party connections are explicitly downplayed, a fact we should bear in mind when examining the kinds of responses the item elicits. Second, and more important, the question is asymmetric in that a negative response is extremely negative — it is tantamount to an assertion that the candidate is not fit to serve in Congress. In contrast, the likes/dislikes items are quite symmetric with their almost casual inquiry into ''anything in particular'' that the respondent likes or dislikes. Moreover, the probes to the ''right sort'' item implicitly ask for up to two positive or up to two negative responses, rather than both, in contrast to the probes for the likes/dislikes items.

Following the ''right sort'' item and probes, the respondent was asked a number of questions dealing with the candidate's social class, religion, nationality, group affiliations, issue positions, and whether he

or she understood the problems of people like the respondent. Then, in concluding that portion of the interview, the respondent was asked ''Is there anything else about Mr. (name of candidate) that made you want to vote for him'' and an analogous item with ''against him.'' Up to two responses were coded for each of the items (according to the same coding scheme previously used). These for/against items are symmetric as are the likes/dislikes, and thus appear to offer a better comparison with the latter than do the ''right sort'' items.

In sum, the 1958 respondent has the opportunity to give four positive and two negative responses, or vice versa. In contrast, the 1978 respondent has the opportunity to give an equal number (four) of positive and negative responses.[12]

Table 6 shows that the reservations expressed in the preceding two paragraphs may well be justified. Consider the figures for incumbents. The 575 respondents who pass through the ''heard or read'' filter in 1958 show a 7:1 positive/negative ratio on the ''right sort'' item, but only a 3:1 ratio on the for/against items. These figures contrast with the 4:1 ratio on the likes/dislikes items turned in by the 1545 respondents who passed the contact filter in 1978. Similar differences appear for the challengers, though here we face the aforementioned complication that the 1978 group appears to be a weaker group than actually contested the elections.

[Table 6 here]

Table 7 provides another view of the overall configuration of the open-ended responses organized here by number of comments rather than number

TABLE 6: Evaluations of House Candidates I, 1958 and 1978

Item		Incumbent (n = 575)	Challenger (n = 222)
1958			
Is he right sort?	Yes	75%	49
	No	10	14
	Don't Know	15	37
Anything else?	For	47%	34
	Against	15	18
		(n = 1545)	(n = 584)
1978			
Anything in Particular			
	Like	54%	19
	Dislike	14	18

of respondents. Again we see the expected differences: the ''right sort'' items elicit disproportionately positive responses.

[Table 7 here]

The upshot of Tables 6 and 7 is that it is virtually impossible to compare the overall ''positivity'' of candidate images between 1958 and 1978. If we added together all the open-ended responses in 1958 we would find that the positivity of candidate images had actually declined, something we might be prepared to believe in the case of challengers, but something that seems quite dubious regarding incumbents. If we adopted the more reasonable strategy of comparing responses to the 1958 for/against items with the 1978 likes/dislikes, we would find that incumbent images appear slightly more positive in 1978. But given the comparability problems I have discussed, and the apparent problems with the 1978 challenger sample, I conclude that it is simply not possible to ascertain whether candidate images are any more or less positive today than in 1958.

What about the content of candidate images? The positivity bias of the 1958 ''right sort'' question should not prevent us from comparing the nature of positive responses in 1958 with those in 1978, and similarly for negative responses. And in fact, the positive (negative) responses to the ''right sort'' item are distributed over the coding categories in very much the same manner as responses to the positive (negative) responses to the for/against items. Thus, I combine the two for purposes of this analysis. Table 8 shows that the content of incumbent images has changed in only one major respect between 1958 and 1978: the proportion of comments about the

TABLE 7: Evaluations of House Candidates II, 1958 and 1978

Incumbents	1958		1978
	Right Sort	For/Against	Likes/Dislikes
Positive	90%	79	84
Negative	10	11	16
Number of Comments	636	468	1755
Challengers			
Positive	77%	67	57
Negative	23	33	43
Number of Comments	203	157	315

incumbent's attentiveness to constituents and the district has more than doubled (new categories were added in 1978 to handle the comments on personal assistance and communication/education). Again, if we believe that incumbents' increasing use of staff, the mail, district offices, etc. has any effect, such a change in the distribution of responses is no more than should be expected.

[Table 8 here]

Several minor changes in the distributions of responses also are present. There is perhaps a marginal increase in the policy and ideological content of the 1978 responses, though I have been generous in equating coding categories in the area of philosophy and ideology. Notice too that party-related aspects of the image have virtually disappeared. And given that the ''right sort'' items in 1958 explicitly asked the respondent to exclude party considerations, the decline in this category probably is greater than shown. Finally, note that the ''personal considerations'' code for 1958 has no comparable code for 1978.[13] Probably such responses in the latter year were placed in the much more extensive personal attributes-characteristics-experience etc. codes which existed in 1978. Incidentally, there appears to be a noticeable difference between the two years in the types of personal attributes mentioned by constituents. But I frankly had difficulty distinguishing many of the categories listed. As shown, when all the various personal characteristics and qualities are combined, the proportion in this general category is identical between the two years.

Table 9 contains a breakdown of negative aspects of the incumbent's

TABLE 8

Breakdown of Positive Evaluations of Incumbent, 1958 and 1978

Category	1958	1978
General, Good Man	11%	7
Experience and Record	20	15
Personal Attributes	30	30
Qualities and Characteristics relevant to serving	(17)	(4)
Personality	(13)	(26)
Constituency Attentiveness	11	25
Helps with Problems	--	(6)
Understands district, keeps in touch	(5)	(7)
Keeps constituents informed	--	(7)
Listens, is accessible	(4)	(6)
Local Issues, Projects	(2)	(2)
Philosophy, Ideology, General Approach to Government	2	7
Domestic Issues/Policy	3	5
Foreign Policy	0+	1
Group References	6	5
Party Affiliations/Connections	5	1
Personal Considerations	8	--
Other	4	4
Number of Comments	942	1475

image. There is not much to discuss here. The increased proportion of negative comments directed at the incumbent's personal attributes is probably an artifact of the more elaborate 1978 coding scheme which absorbed the relatively large ''other'' category which existed in 1958. All other differences are too small to pay much attention to, though again we see that party connections are fewer in 1978 than in 1958.

[Table 9 here]

And what about the challenger's image? While substantively of great importance there is little reason to dwell on this question here, for in addition to all the problems previously discussed, we have the additional one of working with a relatively small number of comments. Moreover, given the apparently unrepresentative nature of the 1978 challengers in the sample, the things people say about them might be similarly unrepresentative. But for completeness' sake the breakdown of the open-ended evaluations of challengers appears in Table 10.

[Table 10 here]

The most notable thing about the comparison of response distributions is the considerably greater focus on personal characteristics by the 1978 respondents. This shift comes at the expense of references to the challenger's experience and record (the weak group of challengers again, or something more?), group references, and party-related references. Such findings are consistent with arguments that the declining value of a congressional seat, the increasing strength of incumbents, the increasing

TABLE 9: Breakdown of Negative Evaluations of Incumbent, 1958 and 1978

Category	1958	1978
General, Bad Man	2%	4
Experience and Record	7	10
Personal Attributes	25	44
Constituency Attentiveness	6	9
Philosophy, Ideology General Approach to Government	7	12
Domestic Issues, Policy	9	6
Foreign Policy	1	1
Group References	6	6
Party Affiliations/Connections	11	6
Personal Considerations	8	-
Other	19	1
Number of Comments	162	280

TABLE 10: Breakdown of Challenger Evaluations, 1958 and 1978

	Positive		Negative	
Category	1958	1978	1958	1978
General, Good Person	14%	9	2	6
Experience and Record	13	4	13	4
Personal Attributes	30	57	45	66
Constituency Attentiveness	7	0	2	0
Philosophy/Ideology/Approach	5	13	3	13
Domestic Issues/Policy	5	9	3	1
Foreign Policy	0+	1	0	0
Group References	11	3	3	1
Party Affiliations/Connections	10	2	9	4
Personal Connections	2	-	9	-
Other	5	3	10	4
Number of Comments	262	180	98	135

costs of campaigning, or whatever have the effect of deterring strong, experienced challengers today who might have entered the lists in earlier days. Or then again, and not incompatible with the preceding hypotheses, local party organizations may no longer perform their function of recruiting and working for credible candidates as well as they did (on average) in the past. The Table contains grounds for a wealth of speculation, but as mentioned, it would be imprudent to place much confidence in the comparisons.

In looking back over the Tables which describe and summarize the open-ended candidate evaluations, it is easy to understand the emergence of the old portrait of House elections. In my opinion Miller and Stokes should have given more attention to the possibility of two-step flows and the like, i.e. the probability that many general and/or personal attribute responses had some long-forgotten and/or several times removed issue or policy basis. In addition, scholars today would be less likely to discount the political relevance of group and party related responses. Despite such caveats, however, it is clear that Miller and Stokes were basically correct: information levels were low, and perceptions of the candidates were largely devoid of policy or issue content. In 1958 House elections were in fact low information, party dominated affairs.

The surprising thing is that the comparable 1978 data give rise to a portrait not much different from the old one. Citizen responses remain relatively devoid of policy and/or issue content. Ideology and personal philosophy may be slightly more common (or my coding may be more generous), but they are still small relative to other categories. Twice as large a

proportion of the sample reports some contact with the 1978 incumbents as reports having heard or read about the 1958 incumbents, but comparisons of name recall and ability to identify the incumbent in a two-horse race suggest that differences in item wording may underlie the apparent increase.

Actually, much of the impetus for the rapid acceptance of the new portrait of House elections appears to arise from too enthusiastic inference from a single 1978 comparison. As discussed earlier, the later survey contained name recognition as well as name recall measures, and the latter were found to underestimate the former by perhaps half. Implicitly, some scholars seem to presume that because the 1958 study underestimated candidate visibility by half, it underestimated everything by half, but there is little evidence for this presumption. In fact, in the absence of a compelling argument to the effect that name recall has become a steadily larger underestimate of name recognition, the figures in Table 2 suggest that name recognition would have been higher in 1958 than in 1978, had the items been included in the former study.

The fact is that most the basis for revising the old portrait comes from items new to the 1978 study. Although few respondents mention policy or ideology in response to the likes/dislikes items, about 40 percent of the sample is willing to offer an opinion of the incumbent's voting record, and a similar percentage places the incumbent on the liberal-conservative scale. Such contrasts raise caution flags. Do they mean that citizens have perceptions of the incumbents' policy positions and ideology, but do not attach sufficient importance to them to mention them in response to the likes/dislikes battery? That suggestion is belied by the large, significant

coefficients that voting record and ideological variables achieve in analyses of 1978 voting behavior. Or is it? Perhaps such coefficients indicate that policy and ideological evaluations are rationalized expressions of more general overall evaluations.

In writing the foregoing I am asking questions, not offering conclusions, though I write as one surprised by the comparison of 1958 and 1978 survey results. There is less change in the data than one might plausibly have expected. At best, the data show some indication of change in the content of perceptions, but there is no conclusive evidence that a vastly increased proportion of the population has perceptions to report.

VOTING BEHAVIOR, 1958 v. 1978

Changes in information levels and in the context and positivity of candidate images obviously may produce changes in voting behavior. The absence of such changes, however, does not preclude change in voting behavior, because variables may rise or decline in behavioral importance even while their values or distributions remain constant. In the preceding pages we have sought (and generally failed) to find dramatic changes in the distributions of variables thought to affect the House voting decision. In this section we seek to ascertain whether those variables do affect House voting decisions, and whether they do so any differently in 1978 than in 1958. All of the methodological difficulties previously discussed come together at this point, but in a cautious spirit let us consider some statistical models of the vote decisions in the two elections.

In this type of analysis comparability of variables is the essence.

No problem exists for certain important variables — name recall, party identification, and the party of the incumbent, for example. Other variables, however, require a bit of work. In the analyses to follow I have used the responses to the open-ended items in the two surveys to create a number of dummy variables which attempt to capture similar kinds of evaluations. Thus, the critical step is the equation of codes between the two surveys, a problem discussed in the preceding section. The challenger variables were simple. So few people had any comments to make about the challenger that I reduced all comments to two categories. ''Challenger positive evaluation'' and ''challenger negative evaluation'' are dummies which take on a value of one if the voter says anything positive and negative respectively. The same consideration governed the creation of a single ''incumbent negative evaluation'' variable. I divided positive evaluations of incumbents into three categories, however. Referring back to Table 8, ''incumbent constituency attentiveness'' is a dummy which takes on a value of one if the respondent mentioned anything coded in that category. Similarly, ''incumbent policy agreement'' is coded one for any positive response dealing with policy, ideology, or general philosophy. Finally, ''incumbent candidate attributes'' is a variable whose value is the total number (i.e. integers from 0 to 4) of positive comments about the incumbent's record and experience, leadership qualities, or personal qualities. It would be desirable to break this category down further, but as I remarked in the preceding section, equation of the codes across the two surveys is the most difficult for this general category. The reader should bear in mind, additionally, that general approval of the incumbent's record

and experience, attribution of leadership qualities, and admiration of his personal qualities may all have a basis in policy, constituency work, partisan rationalization, or whatever.

Table 11 presents probit estimates of the 1958 and 1978 vote decisions using the variables just discussed. In each equation vote for the incumbent, a (0,1) dummy, is the dependent variable. Thus, positive signs indicate that a variable contributes positively to the probability of incumbent support.

[Table 11 here]

In each year a negative evaluation of the incumbent or a positive evaluation of the challenger exerts a major negative influence on the probability of incumbent support. Such evaluations are rare, of course, but clearly important when present. A negative evaluation of the challenger is the largest single influence on the probability of incumbent support in 1958, but the coefficient of this variable falls by two-thirds in 1978. Maybe this is the peculiarity of the 1978 challenger sample at work again, maybe not. Name recall is important in both years, though the magnitudes of the incumbent and challenger coefficients shift. The impact of party identification shows the expected decline between 1958 and 1978, but note that it is still a highly significant influence on the vote. Moreover, remember that 90 percent of the voters have a party identification, whereas far fewer have negative evaluations of the incumbent or any evaluations of the challenger.[14] Another party effect, the Democratic tide running in 1958, shows up in the extra bonus accruing to Democratic incumbents that

TABLE 11: Voting Behavior in House Incumbent-Contested Races, I: 1958 and 1978

		1958	1978
Recall Incumbent		1.00**	.72**
Recall Challenger		- .77**	-1.08**
Party ID	Same as Incumbent	1.18**	.92**
	Opposite Incumbent	-1.17**	- .73**
Democratic Incumbent		.60**	- .09
Incumbent Candidate Qualities		.61**	.52**
"	Constituency Attentiveness	.48	.77**
"	Policy Agreement	- .33	.75**
"	Negative Evaluation	-1.69**	-1.36**
Challenger Positive Evaluation		-1.29**	-1.25**
"	Negative "	1.89**	.66**
Constant		- .17	.77**
$\hat{R}^2$		.79	.70
% Correctly Predicted		90	86
n		721	755

**p < .01

year. In 1978 no such national force was operative.

The most interesting coefficients are those attached to the several types of incumbent positive evaluations. The variable representing the broad category of incumbent candidate qualities appears to have about the same association with the vote in the two surveys. Real differences appear in the other two variables, however. The coefficient of ''constituency attentiveness'' increases considerably between 1958 and 1978 and goes from insignificant to highly significant at the same time. Of course, the increase in the number of respondents in the category contributes to the increased statistical precision of the coefficient. The equation suggests, however, that not only is incumbent constituency attentiveness more salient to the 1978 electorate than the 1958 electorate (Table 8), but that it is more important for their vote as well. Even more interesting are the coefficients of ''policy agreement.'' The coefficient was insignificant and wrong-signed in 1958, but positive and highly significant in 1978. Again, a very small number of respondents composed the variable in 1958, but some real change is likely. For the small proportion of the sample which mentions a policy or ideological matter, perceptions of how the incumbent relates to it are quite important.

Perhaps the most interesting difference between the two equations in Table 11 is that the constant term in the 1958 equation is not significantly different from zero, whereas the 1978 constant term is significantly positive. This means that an independent who did not recall either candidate, and offered no open-ended comments would have voted in 1958 mostly on the basis of the national tide (probability = .43 for a Republican

incumbent, .67 for a Democrat). The same individual in 1978 would have voted for the incumbent far more often than not, regardless of party (probability = .75 for a Democratic incumbent, .78 for a Republican). Thus, the 1978 equation apparently does not exhaust the considerations which lead to votes for incumbents. I regret to say, however, that efforts to pursue this question serve mainly to further becloud an already murky picture insofar as candidate visibility is concerned.

Consider Table 12. This Table differs from Table 11 only in that the estimated equations contain an additional dummy variable which takes on a value of one if the respondent can correctly identify the incumbent when presented with the candidates' names. As seen, the addition of the ''know candidate'' variable does absolutely nothing to the 1958 equation: no coefficients change by more than .01 between Tables 11 and 12, and the new variable itself is almost literally of zero estimated importance. The story is different in the 1978 equation, however. The ''know incumbent'' variable is highly significant, and a comparison of the constant terms in the 1978 equations in Tables 11 and 12 reveals that addition of the new variable diminishes the importance of the constant, though the latter remains statistically significant and of moderate size. One begins to suspect that name recall captures more of what we mean by candidate visibility in 1958 than in 1978.

[Table 12 here]

Table 13 adds to such suspicions. The first equation in this Table is simply a reproduction of the 1958 equation from Table 11. The second

TABLE 12: Voting Behavior in House Incumbent-Contested Races, II: 1958 and 1978

	1958	1978
Know Incumbent	.02	.48**
Recall Incumbent	- .99**	.64**
Recall Challenger	- .77**	-1.07**
Party ID { Same as Incumbent	1.17**	.95**
Party ID { Opposite Incumbent	-1.18**	- .73**
Democratic Incumbent	.60**	- .11
Incumbent Candidate Qualities	.61**	.47**
" Constituency Attentiveness	.48	.72**
" Policy Agreement	- .33	.72**
" Negative Evaluation	-1.69**	-1.45**
Challenger Positive Evaluation	-1.29**	-1.27**
" Negative "	1.89**	.70**
Constant	- .18	.48*
$\hat{R}^2$	.79	.70
% Correctly Predicted	90	88
n	721	755

** p < .01

* p < .05

equation is the same as the 1978 equation in Table 11 except that incumbent name recognition is substituted for name recall. The results are rather striking. Incumbent recognition in 1978 behaves as name recall did in 1958. Their coefficients are virtually identical, and the 1978 constant finally fades to insignificance. In a statistical sense the 1978 equation now exhausts the considerations which produce support for incumbents. The second 1978 equation in Table 13 contains both recognition and recall variables for incumbents and challengers. As seen, both recall and recognition contribute significantly to incumbent support. Recognition, however, adds little to challenger support after recall is taken into account. We have no comparable equation for 1958, of course, but based on Tables 12 and 13 the suspicion would be that recognition measures would not contribute anything significant beyond the effects of recall in that year.

[Table 13 here]

At several points in preceding sections I have remarked that there is no compelling argument to the effect that name recall is any more of an underestimate in 1958 than in 1978. I still know of no compelling argument, but the statistical results in this section suggest that recall was less of an underestimate in 1958 than today. This is only the most tentative of hypotheses, and it is based on a post-hoc attempt to account for perplexing statistical results rather than good substantive arguments. Still, the statistical results are perplexing unless some temporal difference in the effects of the recall measure is posited. One possibility is that the greatly increased use of the frank and other means of mass communication has

TABLE 13: Voting Behavior in House Incumbent-Contested Races,III: 1958 and 1978

	1958	1978	1978
Recall Incumbent	1.00**	--	.63**
Recognize Incumbent	--	.96**	1.02**
Recall Challenger	-.77**	--	-.97**
Recognize Challenger	--	-.72**	-.29
Party ID: Same as Incumbent	1.18**	.95**	.98**
Party ID: Opposite Incumbent	-1.17**	-.77**	-.75**
Democratic Incumbent	.60**	-.08	-.21
Incumbent Candidate Qualities	.61**	.52**	.46**
" Constituency Attentiveness	.48	.85**	.74**
" Policy Agreement	-.33	.71**	.73**
" Negative Evaluation	-1.69**	-1.30**	-1.45**
Challenger Positive Evaluation	-1.29**	-1.31**	-1.27**
" Negative "	1.89**	.64**	.64*
Constant	-.17	.13	.18
$\hat{R}^2$	.79	.69	.71
% Correctly Predicted	90	88	87
n	721	753	752

** p < .01

* p < .05

created a new group of individuals with only the faintest glimmer of knowledge about the incumbent, a group only slightly above zero on some underlying visibility scale. Possibily the sensitive application of sophisticated scaling techniques might enable us to explore the structure of candidate visibility over time, but this is a matter far beyond the scope of this paper.

SUMMARY, 1958 v. 1978

Many pages ago I observed that House voting decisions might have changed in any or all of several ways between 1958 and 1978. First, and most obviously, change in the frequency of occurrence of a variable (eg. more widespread name recall) would imply a change in the number of people whose decisions that variable could affect. Second, evaluations of candidates (eg. the ratio of likes to dislikes) might change even while a constant proportion of the electorate reports such evaluations. Third, the content of evaluations (eg. what citizens like and dislike) might vary even while the proportion of citizens holding such evaluations and the ratio of positive and negative evaluations holds steady. And fourth, the manner in which variables affect the voting decision might change. For example, some variables (e.g. party identification) might decline in importance, while others (e.g. constituency attentiveness) might rise.

The preceding pages contain only one piece of evidence for the first possibility: the doubling of positive responses to the contact items in 1978 over those to the ''read or heard'' item in 1958. As discussed, however, the different question formats, the unexplained doubling for the

weak 1978 challengers, and conflicting evidence from other items (name recall, know incumbent) raise doubts about the extent to which real distributional change has occurred.

Similarly, we have found no conclusive evidence that candidates are evaluated any more or less positively today than two decades ago. The evidence is not so much negative as completely ambiguous. Differences in question wording and sequencing, noncomparable filters, and problems with the 1978 challenger sample basically preclude any attempt to compare the relative positivity of candidate images over time.

We have found somewhat more evidence compatible with the third possibility; in certain respects the substance of citizen information and evaluations has changed. Tables 3, 4, 5 and 8 all suggest that varieties of constituent and district attentiveness now loom larger in the memory banks of voters than they did in 1958. Association of House candidates with political parties has correspondingly diminished. Such changes are consistent with theories which posit that today's House incumbents are evaluated according to less partisan and less controversial standards than those of yesterday.

Finally, an analysis of voting behavior in the 1958 and 1978 elections shows considerable continuity, but some change. Party loyalties continue to exert an important effect on the voting as does candidate visibility, variously measured. The decline in the impact of national forces between the two elections is consistent with the argument that modern incumbents have managed to insulate themselves from such forces to a considerable extent. The candidate evaluations people form mattered a great

deal in 1958 and continue to matter a great deal today, though evaluations concerning constituency attentiveness and policy/ideological compatibility appear to matter more than previously. Again, however, one should remember that far more citizens have a party identification and a flicker of recognition of candidate names than have any sense of where the candidates stand on the issues. There is no indication at all that between 1958 and 1978 the U.S. developed an electorate of Edmund Burkes.

What then do we make of all the preceding? Not so much as I had hoped, I regret to say. This paper is a first step in the attempt to analyze directly (rather than by projection of 1978 findings) sources of change in the House elections of the past generation. The topic is an important one, and with further effort and perseverance perhaps others will be more definitive where I have been tentative and exploratory.

APPENDIX

CODING CATEGORIES EQUATED IN COMPARISONS OF 1958 AND 1978 OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Catetory	1958 (Note 1)	1978 (Note 7)*
General, good man bad man	00	201
Record and experience	1-2	211-297
Personal abilities and attributes relevant to leadership	3,5,13	301-320 397,505
Personal Qualities	4,6-9	401-497
Party	10-12	500-504 506-508
Constituency Attentiveness		
Helps with problems	—	321-322
Understand district	15	323-324
Keeps constituents informed	—	325-326
Listens, accessible	14	327-328
Local issues, projects	30-31	329-331
National Domestic Issues	20-29	900-1009
Foreign Policy	40-49	1101-1197
Philosophy, ideology, general approach to government	32-39	601-697 531-536 800-897
Group References	50-69	1201-1297
Personal Considerations	70-79	—
Other	80-90	701-723

* Many of the codes listed under note 7 were not utilized in coding the Congressional likes/dislikes.

FOOTNOTES

1. The following passage is frequently quoted:

> Of our sample of Congressmen who were opposed for re-election in 1958, more than four-fifths said the outcome in their districts had been strongly influenced by the electorate's response to their records and personal standing. Indeed, this belief is clear enough to present a notable contradiction: Congressmen feel that their individual legislative actions may have considerable impact on the electorate, yet some simple facts about the Representative's salience to his constituents imply that this could hardly be true. (Miller and Stokes, 1963)

2. Note the obvious parallel with the literature on voting in presidential elections. The American Voter, a 1950s portrait, has been pushed aside by The Changing American Voter, a 1970s portrait. But here too there is considerable disagreement over the amount and nature of real change that has actually occurred. Some scholars (Achen, 1975; Repass, 1971) suggest that a variety of weaknesses in the 1950s survey instruments produced a poor likeness of the electorate as it then existed. Other scholars suggest that differences in questionnaire design hopelessly confound the study of temporal change (see the articles, responses, and rejoinders in the May 1978 and February 1979 American Journal of Political Science).

3. Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1979, pp. 125-128) provide a good illustration with their discussion of the changing meaning of the "size of government" item between 1964 and 1972.

4. An example of the latter possibility was the suggestion that the increasingly comfortable margins of incumbents were the direct result of an increasing tendency by state legislatures to protect their House incumbents by providing them with districts in which their party held a comfortable registration edge. This suggestion was quickly rejected (Bullock, 1975; Ferejohn, 1977).

5. It is not clear, however, why Payne's argument is not symmetric — that is, those who challenge incumbents should also increasingly tend to be "show horse" types and thus offset the increase on the incumbent side.

6. To illustrate, name recognition of House incumbents in 1978 was about 80 percent, whereas their recall figure was about 35 percent. Name recognition of the challengers was about 40 percent whereas, their recall figure was about 11 percent.

7. This explanation does not begin to account for all of the drop between the 1958 and 1978 figures, however. The senior third of incumbents in 1978 had a recall figure of only 37 percent, still noticeably below the 1958 figure.

8. The well-known tendency for voters to over-report support for the winner (in Presidential elections) does not appear to underlie this finding. Jacobson (1981a) reports that in previous House elections the

reported and actual votes were very close. See the 1958 Figure in Table 2.

9. In the 1958 study the House candidates' names were given to the respondent as part of the ''know incumbent '' item:

> Q. 48. Of course, the names aren't too important, but there were two major candidates, Mr. (name of Democrat) who ran on the Democrat ticket and Mr. (name of Republican) who ran on the Republican ticket. Do you happen to know (if either of these candidates) (if he) is already in Congress.

In the 1978 study, names were provided prior to the likes/dislikes battery, then the ''know incumbent'' item was asked:

> Q. A21. Do you happen to know if either of these candidates, ‹the Democratic House candidate› or ‹the Republican House candidate›, was already in the U.S. House of Representatives before the election?

10. In turns out, however, that in the 1978 study only two percent (n = 15) of those who could not identify the incumbent later reported casework experiences. The figure was four percent for district service. If the 1958 situation was comparable, failure to ask the items of the whole sample probably led to very little loss of information. I am much less sanguine about the situation with the 1958 open-ended items discussed in the text below.

11. In the less enlightened 1950s the question phrasing was as follows:

> Q. 67. Sometimes when a man is elected to Congress the voters want him to do something he disagrees with. When this happens do you think he should do what the voters think best, or should he do what he thinks best.

12. There is a plausible argument to the effect that this particular asymmetry between the 1958 and 1978 question forms has little empirical import. In 1978 only 20 respondents gave more than two incumbent dislikes and only four gave more than two challenger dislikes. Thus, it is probable that few 1958 respondents were denied the opportunity to make more negative comments than they might have wished. Still, the 1958 wording may well have stimulated more positive comments that the 1978 wording.

13. The 1958 ''personal considerations'' category included ''friends and neighbors'' comments and general ''I just like (dislike) him'' sentiments.

14. Strong, weak and independent identifiers of the incumbent's party are classified as ''same.'' Strong, weak and independent identifiers of the other party are classified as opposite. The suppressed reference category is pure Independent.

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